DCFS Weekly Update From the State Office

Friday, September 8, 2000

What is a Family?

By Caren J. Frost, Anthropologist with DCFS

Over the past two years, since I became a part of the DCFS team, there has been constant discussion about the "family" and ensuring that our work is "family-centered." But I have been continually asking myself, what does this mean? I would like to spend about three weekly updates and work through defining, probably mostly for myself,

1. What constitutes a family (this week),

2. What are the data connected with family context in the United States and Utah (next week), and

3. How all this applies to the "family-centered practice" for the work that caseworkers do in the field (two weeks from now).

As I was reviewing some of the anthropological texts about family structure and its function, I came across two definitions that I believe best describe from a social science perspective what constitutes a family.

First, Haviland defines the family as "a residential kin group composed of a woman, her dependent children, and at least one adult male joined through marriage or blood relationship." Haviland also notes that while in most cultures the mother-offspring unit plus an adult male is seen as the normal form a of family, in the United States and Western cultures in general a female-headed household is seen as a non-normative of family. In non-Western cultures, the extended family form lends itself to having brothers and sisters and their children (dependent and independent) in a closer connection to one another. However, in the West, the nuclear family structure with wife, husband, and "their" children does not lend itself to maintaining bonds with other close kin (blood- or marriage-related).

Second, Ember and Ember define the family as "a social and economic unit consisting minimally of one or more parents and their children." Most often, the mother, as the primary caregiver for the children, is seen as the "parent"; thus families across cultures are more matrifocal than patrifocal in nature.

In conclusion, both of these texts are providing a similar definition for us. Let me know what you think—e-mail me!

Better Scores to Reflect Improved Practice?

By Craig Monson, Office of Services Review

You are a supervisor who wants to help your staff better implement Practice Model principles. You are a caseworker who may still be a bit unsure what those principles are. We have a few tips on improving Qualitative Case Review results:

- *Discuss the Qualitative Case Review Protocol as a team.* Office of Services Review (OSR) staff has reviewed the qualitative review protocol in regional team meetings. We've discussed in greater detail, for instance, what the qualitative reviewers are looking for as far as long-term view and functional assessments. If you want us to discuss the protocol with your team, we'd love to do this. If you don't want us infecting your team, please consider going over the protocol yourselves. We can e-mail you the protocol if you don't have it.

- *Discuss cases reviewed last year.* In Southwest Region, each week this past year every team discussed one of the 19 cases reviewed. The team reviewed the case stories and discussed strengths, practice improvement opportunities, what Practice Model principles would help increase the likelihood of success, etc. Why not take several case story write-ups and discuss them together, not with the idea of blaming a worker, but with the idea of strengthening practice? If you don't have the case stories for your region, we can send them to you. If you want to use stories outside your region, we can likewise send them to you. If you'd like us to provide examples and discuss how these cases were scored, we can do that.

- *Review a case together.* Select a case—maybe one a member of your team is currently working on or perhaps a closed case—and review it using the Qualitative Review Protocol. Each team member reads the case record and then the entire team could discuss strengths and practice improvement opportunities based on the protocol. Again, if you would like someone from our office to come and discuss how a reader might score the case, we'd be happy to do so.

- *Review the Qualitative Review cases selected for completeness.* You will get a list of the cases to be reviewed in your region about six weeks in advance. We suggest you check to make sure documentation is up-to-date. This will help the readers as they review the case information and will help review in your own mind the Practice Model principles.

We hope these ideas help. Please call or e-mail us (801-538-4582 or cmonson@state.ut.us) if we can help in any way. Thanks

Department Custody
By Linda Prince

When a youth qualifies for services from more than one Division in the Department of Human Services, custody may be given to the Department instead of a single Division. When the Local Interagency Council (LIC) or Staffing Committee team determines that Department custody is appropriate, the team will designate a Division, or when possible a Division staff member, within the Department to be the case manager.

The cases where DCFS is the case manager are identified in SAFE through the case/person tab under removal/custody. Workers need to click on the dept. box to indicate the case as Department custody. **Please note the adjudication data must be entered before the dept. box is available.**

If you are a case manager on a case determined as Department custody, please make sure this box in SAFE is checked. If you have any problems, contact the SAFE Help Desk. The regional Information Analysts can run a region or office report to list Department custody youth with DCFS as case manager. Thank you.

Timebuster—How to Copy E-mail into SAFE
By Catherine Hoang
I learned this today from Corey Richardson, DCFS caseworker from Tooele and a SAFE expert and thought it was very useful. You can save time by copying the e-mail into SAFE rather than re-writing it.
> *Go into GroupWise*
> *Go to View*
> *Click on Quickviewer*
> *Highlight the text that you want to copy by*
> *Clicking on EDIT*
> *Then click on SELECT ALL*

In order to get the whole e-mail copied, you will need to do the following in GroupWise:
> *Go to the Viewfinder window and Right click.*
> *Go to View Item*
> *Click on SIZE*
> *Click on Fit to Window Width*

Go to SAFE and open the activity recording of the case that you want to copy the e-mail into.
> *Create a new activity.*
> *Then hit Control V and this will paste the e-mail into the activity.*

I hope this works for you and saves you time, as well. Thanks, Corey!